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Identifying Potential Terrorists: Visuality, Security and the Channel Project

This paper analyses how British counter-radicalisation policy, and the Channel project in particular, constitutes individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation as visible, producing them as subjects of intervention. It thus asks, how can *potential* terrorists be identified and made knowable? The paper first argues that to understand Channel, it is crucial to develop a conceptual account of the security politics of (in)visibilisation that draws attention to the ways in which security regimes can, at times, function primarily through the production of regimes of (in)visibility. Utilising this approach, the paper focusses on the role of ‘indicators’ as a technology of (in)visibilisation, producing certain subjects as newly visibilised as threatening: a role that is central to the functioning of Channel. Yet such a production is political. In bringing together a politics of care and a politics of identity, it is a regime of (in)visibility that produces new sites of intervention, contains significant potential consequences for the expression of certain identities, and raises new and troubling possibilities for how contemporary life may be secured.

KEYWORDS: Channel, counter-radicalisation, Prevent, visuality, critical security studies, politics of care, politics of identity

Introduction

Since the early 2000s, and especially since the bombings of July 7th 2005, there has been a keen interest in the problem of radicalisation within the UK: the problem of how some individuals come to be involved in 'extremist' political violence. The question of how the UK might prevent these processes of *becoming* violent has come to occupy a central place within political and media discourse. How can individuals at risk of becoming involved in terrorism be identified? How can this *potential* be made *visible*? At the cutting-edge of global counter-radicalisation practice, the UK represents a crucial site in the institutional response to these questions. 'Prevent', one of the four pillars of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST, represents the institutional space in which these problems are tackled. With the ongoing, if not increased, threat from violent extremism, and the small yet very visible number of British citizens seeking involvement in political violence, these concerns are unlikely to abate soon.

Within the academic literature, there has been an increasing interest in Prevent and how it seeks to conceptualise and intervene into processes of radicalisation (Schmid, 2013; de Goede and Simon, 2013; Heath-Kelly, 2013; Martin, 2014a,b; Mythen et al., 2017, Kundnani, 2014). Intimately related is a concern with how Muslim communities are policed within the context of the war on terror (Kundnani, 2007, 2014; Thomas, 2012; Kapoor, 2013; Communities and Local Government Committee, 2010; O'Toole et al., 2016; Ragazzi, 2016). Yet there has been little attention paid to the specific mechanisms through which the individuals of Prevent's ambitions – those 'vulnerable' to radicalisation – come to be constituted as identifiable, *visible* manifestations of threat, which are then subject to

intervention (although see Mythen et al., 2017). Sitting at the intersection of security, temporality, visibility and care, this paper explores the institutional space that produces these processes of becoming violent as knowable and visible: Channel.

The 'Channel' process is the mechanism through which 'vulnerabilities to radicalisation' are reported and, if deemed necessary, where interventions to manage such vulnerabilities are formulated. The central argument of this paper, is that the Channel process cannot be understood without a reading of the politics of (in)visibility through which it functions. Taking cues from Deleuze's reading of Foucault's oeuvre, the paper situates processes of (in)visibilisation as crucial for the production and distribution of the security gaze (Deleuze, 2006: 3-58). Central to many security practices, it is argued, is the question of how threats are produced as identifiable and how this knowledge is trained and communicated as a regime of (in)visibility. Not only is this analytical lens essential to reading the politics of the Channel process, it thus also foregrounds a wider analysis of the relation between security and visibility. This paper, conceptually and empirically, thus seeks to demonstrate how those who are understood to be vulnerable to radicalisation are *made visible*.

This approach coheres with recent developments in critical security methodologies, taking seriously Williams' (2003) provocation that critical security studies needs to pay attention to visualities as sites of communicative action. Nevertheless, it is an approach that differs from much of the work undertaken within the critical security literature on visibility in that it is not concerned with visual artefacts. Following Andersen, Vuori and Mutlu (2015; see also Andersen, Vuori and Guillaume, 2015), it is necessary to distinguish between approaches to visibility that, on the one hand, are concerned with 'visual security' and studying politically

meaningful visual artefacts and, on the other, 'visualities of security', and knowledge practices that constitute what is rendered as visible and what is not. It is the latter with which this paper is concerned. In dialogue with recent work within the sociology of visibility and critical security studies, the paper develops an account of regimes of (in)visibility as distinct, but intimately connected to, discursive regimes. Regimes of (in)visibility, it will be argued, can be understood as economies of visibility that produce relations of the gaze, governing who sees and who is seen, who is visible and who is not.

Through this analysis, the paper seeks to make two wider contributions. First, it seeks to deepen the insights of the emerging literature, exploring, conceptually and empirically, the relationship *between* the discursive and the visible. The paper argues that many of the practices with which critical security are concerned rely upon an attempt to translate discursive knowledges into visibilised objects or subjects of threat. These can be understood as *strategies of (in)visibilisation*. The paper situates the technology of the 'indicator' as a key example of such strategies, and also reflects upon the interaction of such strategies and discursive knowledges with existent regimes of (in)visibility. Second, the paper argues that it is impossible to make sense of Channel without understanding it *as* a strategy of (in)visibilisation. In reading the practices of Channel through this lens, the paper provides an account of Prevent which situates it as productive of new subjects of visibility, at the intersection of a politics of care and a politics of identity. Contributing to recent work that foregrounds the central relation within Prevent between social policy, care and counter-radicalisation (see Heath-Kelly, 2017a,b; Ragazzi, 2017), Channel is conceptualised as a site that seeks to produce a pastoral-security gaze. This paper thus draws attention to the practices through which security actors actively seek to produce and inform regimes of

(in)visibility, insisting that to secure demands strategies of (in)visibilisation, illuminating subjects and objects of threat that thus require mediation.

The paper is comprised of four sections. First, the paper demonstrates the increasing centrality of Prevent, and, specifically, the Channel project, within British security practice.. Second, the paper develops a conceptual account of strategies of (in)visibilisation, arguing that central to many security practices is the need to produce subjects and objects of threat *as visible*. The third section discusses the role of the ‘indicator’ as a specific technology of (in)visibilisation. It demonstrates that Channel functions through the articulation of ‘vulnerability indicators’, which seek to train the professional gaze, directing it towards newly visibilised subjects. The fourth section draws out the substantive politics of this regime of (in)visibility. It argues that, contrary to how the strategy presents itself, such practices are imbued with an identity politics that visibilises some and invisibilises others, primarily visibilising those who are perceived as, or would identify as, Muslim. Yet, at the intersection of care and identity, it is also productive of new lines of sight, integrating the pastoral gaze with questions of security and identity to illuminate novel subjects of threat. The article concludes by reflecting on the consequences of this analysis of Prevent, arguing that when read as a strategy of (in)visibilisation, it can be interpreted as at the forefront of visibilising life itself as a process of (potentially dangerous) becoming. It is the frontline of a profound merging of a politics of care and a politics of identity, enabling new subjects and objects of risk to be identified, and with significant implications for our understanding of how contemporary life is to be secured.

Prevent and the Channel Programme

Prevent, the United Kingdom's counter-radicalisation strategy, forms one of the four pillars of CONTEST, the UK Government's overarching counter-terrorism strategy drawn-up in response to the attacks of 9/11. First presented to Cabinet in 2003 (Omand, 2010: 86), the strategy was published in 2006 and significantly reiterated in 2009 and 2011 (Home Office, 2006; 2009; 2011a). During this evolution, the Prevent pillar has grown in relative importance, meriting a significant update in 2007 and a separate, extensive policy document in 2011 (DCLG, 2007; Home Office, 2011b). Central to Prevent is the ambition of 'tackling the radicalisation of individuals' (Home Office, 2006: 9), an ambition that manifests most clearly in the Channel project. Channel was initially introduced as a pilot programme in April 2007, operative in twelve police forces representing localities understood to be at particular risk, before being rolled out nationally in April 2012. With the passing of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, it is now a statutory duty for a number of specified authorities, including local government, prisons and probation services, education and child care, health and social care and the police.

The active work carried out by Channel consists of three principle tasks: to identify individuals at risk from violent extremism; to assess the nature and extent of the risk; and, if considered suitable for a Channel intervention, to develop the most appropriate support for the individual concerned (Home Office, 2010: 7). This process is managed by a multi-agency panel consisting of relevant professions. Any referral is first screened and, if considered appropriate, the panel will then assess whether the individual is vulnerable to violent extremism (Home Office, 2010; 2012). If accepted onto the Channel programme, a support package will be tailor made by a multi-agency panel depending on the needs of the

individual. The guidance suggests that for someone in the 'early stages' of radicalisation, a 'diversionary activity' may be sufficient, whereas someone who was 'already radicalised' might require a 'more focussed and structured one-on-one mentoring programme' (Home Office, 2012: 20). Progress is reviewed at least every three months, and the intervention is considered to have achieved its aims when the panel is satisfied that the risks have been successfully reduced or managed.

As the Channel project has been extended, the numbers of referrals have risen year on year. Latest figures from the Home Office (2017: 4) show that for the year 2015/16, 7,631 referrals were made to the Channel process. This contrasts with a sum total of 3,934 referrals made during the seven years from the beginning of the programme in 2007 to March 31st, 2014 (NPCC, no date). It is reasonable to assume this increase is, in part, due to Channel now being a statutory duty, with, in the 2015/16 reporting year, schools referring the most cases by sector (33%) followed by the police (31%) local authorities (11%) and the health sector (6%). In the 2015/16 recording year, 65% of referrals were for 'Islamist extremism' and 10% were for 'right-wing' extremism (although 1,173 referrals were unspecified in this regard). For 2015/16, only 5% of referrals resulted in a Channel intervention (compared to 20% for the programme until March 2014 (NPCC, no date)). Channel thus represents a significant and increasingly important mechanism within the contemporary British security apparatus. A considerable number of individuals are referred each year, and it is an important aspect of the professional life of many. Yet it also raises key questions. How is this *potential* to violent extremism identified such that it can *be* referred? And why are there so many false positives at the referral stage?

Politics of (In)Visibility and Strategies of (In)Visibilisation

The question at the heart of the Channel programme could be summarised as follows: how can potential terrorists *be made visible*, prior to their *becoming* a terrorist? In order to fully and critically engage with this question, it is therefore necessary to provide a theoretical and methodological account of the temporality and visualities of identifying threats. The argument of this section is that all acts of security require the mediation and disciplining of an uncertain future. To secure, therefore, requires the crossing of a *temporal gap*, the space between the present and the conceptualisation of a threat to come. This in turn requires discursive and institutional mechanisms that make such a traversal legible and actionable, and in the specific context of Channel, produce those who are 'vulnerable to radicalisation' as *visible*. The problematic of Channel thus speaks to wider processes and practices of security. Whether the object of concern is potential terrorists, projected migration flows or the complex security implications of climate change, to secure requires the *identification* of that which is considered threatening.

Foregrounding the analytical centrality of 'visibility' first requires an account of the relation between security and temporality. A good starting point is a distinction drawn by Massumi (2013) between dangers and threats. Dangers, in this reading, represent an immediacy and localisability of harm. The harm exists in the future, but there is a linear and observable line between the present and the future harm. It is a harm that is therefore clear and present. Threat, on the other hand, exists in a futural space that cannot be related to the present

along linear pathways. It exists primarily as an affect; it is, for Massumi (2013) something that is felt and intuited. There is a gap between the present and the harm that is said and felt to come. Threat is thus ontologically characterised by an inherent and unresolvable *uncertainty*. Yet, it is deemed, the harms such threats contain cannot be allowed to occur (see for instance Anderson, 2010). Thus, to secure – and here it is possible to locate *the* central problematic of security – is to cross this uncertain futural gap. Yet doing so requires work. Unlike with dangers, the central task is first to make the threatened harm *knowable*, *legible* and thus *actionable*.¹ This work is not neutral. Rather, the mechanisms constructed and deployed to cross this gap are constitutive of the nature of the threat and the possible mediations these allow. Whilst the futures with which security actors might be concerned is limitless, their actual constitution will necessarily be partial – conceptualising and visualising only a portion of actual potential futures that will be culturally and epistemically limited (de Goede, 2008). Every act of securing is thus a performative traversal that structures its own political terrain.

Practices of security can, therefore, be understood as a function of distributing intelligibility of threat in the present. While not the only mechanism through which security functions, central to many security practices is the identification of individuals who are deemed threatening (for the future) on account of their actions (in the present). At the heart of this process is thus the question of security visualities; the processes of *making visible* the traces the future leaves in the present. To highlight this aspect of security practice, the paper now

¹ Recent scholarship has started to foreground the numerous ways in which security rationalities seek to disclose and then act upon an uncertain future, encompassing, but by no means limited to, the use of imagination (van Munster and Sylvest 2014), conjecture (Aradau and van Munster (2011), scenario planning (Collier and Lackoff, 2008) and emergency response preparation (Anderson and Adey, 2012).

turns to Deleuze's (2006) reading of Foucault, wherein he identifies two overlapping, yet nevertheless distinct, operations of knowledge. The first, and by far the most utilised in contemporary analysis, is the system of language established by the statement. The second, is that of the 'visible', which, in Deleuze's language, operates as a system of light (Deleuze, 2006: 28). Narrating his use of these terms within *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Deleuze shows how Foucault erects a sphere of that which can be said and articulated and, as a separate albeit co-emergent sphere of knowledge, a sphere of that which can be seen and sensed, and cannot be reduced to utterances (Deleuze, 2006: 27). Deleuze, in tracing the evolution of Foucault's thought, argues that this conception of the 'non-discursive' attains its moment of positivity in *Discipline and Punish*, particularly through the description of the prison.

The example of the panopticon is central, and has endured, as it provides an expression of this realm of the visible unto itself. The prison, as Deleuze (2006: 28) relates, represented a novel way of acting upon bodies and could *not* be reduced to the system of language that constitutes penal law. Penal law was concerned with that aspect of the criminal that could be articulated, namely classifications of offences and sentences. The prison, as an environment, inscribed lines and systems of visibility within a discrete architecture, structuring lines of sight that are *themselves productive* of a series of visibilities (Deleuze, 2006: 28):

Each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companions. He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication (Foucault, 1995: 200).

The panopticon, for Deleuze, thus functions as an architecture that distributes the gaze. The play of luminosity – of light and of shadow – is *itself productive* of the way that social reality is seen and interpreted. The guard sees without being seen. The prisoner is seen but cannot see. And it is this gaze, constituted by its environment, that produces a whole array of subjectivations and power relations. The prison was a ‘system of light before being a figure of stone’ (Deleuze, 2006: 28).

Deleuze’s reading of Foucault reasserts the independence and importance of the visible as a distinct sphere of social relations, capable of producing objects and subjects of knowledge, and relations of power. A sphere intimately linked, yet distinct from, the often more privileged realms of the sayable. While developing crucial insights in relation to visibility and disciplinary power, Foucault nevertheless failed to extend these to other sites of social relations (Tazzioli and Walters, 2016). Within the panoptic diagram, seeing and being seen is, as Tazzioli and Walters (2016: 448-449) identify, a unidirectional activity with a clear division of who sees and who is seen. Within other social sites, the distribution of seeing and being seen is plural and multifaceted. Yet, the utility of the panoptic diagram is that through it, the specificity of the visible emerges. Whereas the statement is defined by language, regimes of visibility are defined by the gaze, and the given structuring and distribution of the gaze within a space of social relations.

In this context, three qualities of the visible can be identified, that, taken together, can be understood as constitutive of specific *regimes of (in)visibility*. First, the production of objects, subjects and processes as sites of knowledge that are visibly perceptible. To see, in this context is not, however, a pure process of representation. Visuality is a certain form of

practice, a complex process of integration, in which a whole assemblage of sensed data is brought together to build a coherent representation of a subject or object (Mirzoeff, 2011: 474). It is in short, a visualisation. As Mirzoeff (2011: 474) argues, enacting visibility 'must be imaginary, rather than perceptual, because what is being visualized is too substantial for any one person to see and is created from information, images, and ideas'. Amore (2009: 22-23), discussing a slightly different context of technology-driven algorithmic security processes, draws attention to the way in which disparate data points are combined in order to visualise an image of the potentially threatening individual. It is in this process of integration that the image of the subject of future threat can be produced as a coherent representation that is amenable to visibilisation. To see is never to see without mediation, and it is regimes of visibility that provide the integrative possibilities available in a particular site of social relations.

Second, a regime of visibility will distribute the gaze – who sees and who is seen? What is worth seeing? Who has the authority to define and integrate certain subjects and objects as visible? Providing a post-colonial reading of security visualities, Dixit (2014: 339) rightly identifies that ways of looking have always been relational, and, within a history of coloniality, have been a central way in which the 'we' (often white, Western males) make sense of 'them' (usually bodies of colour), a gaze which is intimately related to productions of threat and danger. Nevertheless, the gaze should not be reduced to relations of control or coercion. As Brighenti (2007: 339) argues, regimes of visibility are also defined by their 'style'. Thus, he argues, while the control-type is clear within the panopticon, the social-type of gaze might be mobilised around the demand for recognition – the demand to *be* seen –

to structure the gaze to recognise previously invisibilised minority groups. Thus, the visible emerges as both a relational field, governing who sees and who is seen within a given social site, and a site of knowledge, determining what is seen, and what such sites of visibility mean. Following Brighenti (2007: 324), the social category of visibility can be situated at the intersection of aesthetics (relations of perception) and politics (relations of power).²

Third, as regimes of visibility are constituted by the gaze, all acts of viewing are partial and constrained. To view takes time, processing and cognition – attention is not limitless, and will thus only focus on certain sites. Following Amoore (2009: 19-20), regimes of (in)visibility are therefore also *economies* of attentiveness, apportioning and segregating the world into that which is worthy of attention and that which is not. In a context of security, it is assumed that security actors will thus (at least ideally) pay attention to those subjects and objects that are made visible due to being imbued with threat. Regimes of (in)visibility thus function as economies within which certain sites are *more* and *less* visible.

Yet, while this foregrounds the constitutive importance of the visible, in positing this distinction between the discursive and the visible, what emerges as analytically central is the question of their relation. Crucially, in seeking to understand security regimes that, in traversing the temporal gap, must actively produce knowledge of the future threat that is to be secured, these contexts are not often those of the visible unto itself that is represented by the panopticon. Instead, they require translation between the sayable and the visible. Brighenti reads Foucault's distinction between the sayable and the visible as redolent of a

² This way of conceiving of the visual bears marked similarities to the work of Rancière and his understanding that political regimes are always also aesthetic regimes (Rancière, 2004: 12-13; 1999: 57-58).

modernist privileging of the discursive over the ocular. He regards Foucault's reading of power as 'sensorially deprived', wherein his analysis of images is only mobilised to 'claim the priority of discourse over a visible which remains wholly heterogeneous and can never be entirely reduced to it' (Brighenti, 2010: 12). A more sympathetic reading of Foucault's oeuvre might situate the significance of the visible in Foucault's work differently. While Brighenti is right to highlight that for Foucault, the discursive often takes centre stage, this need not be read as a value judgement, but can be framed as a methodological and analytical move. What emerges across much of Foucault's work is a concern with how discursive knowledges and practices are mobilised *through* the production of new sites of visibility. Thus, one of the common threads within his work is the identification of a particular site of visibility that, in being *made* visible, is produced as a subject or object which can then be mediated. The madman, the vagrant, flows of population. All are produced through regimes of discursive knowledge that seek to integrate the problematised site as an observable phenomena, and to direct the gaze towards it.

An emerging literature is now negotiating the intersection of security and visibility. Yet, for the most part, the concern is with how actors (both 'powerful' and not) negotiate positions of visibility and invisibility. Both Tazzioli and Walters (2016:879) and de Vries (2016: 879) discuss visibility in terms of 'tactics' – framing social relations of visibility as a strategic space within which subjects negotiate their luminosity. De Vries (2016), for instance, utilises a framework of the politics of (in)visibility to narrate how immigrants in Malaysia navigate their social visibility, and how, and if, they are seen. She maps a complex regime of (in)visibility, and the means through which immigrant subjects negotiate it:

the mobility and contingency of these processes – affirming a presence in official invisibility; being invisibilised through visibility, or vice versa; reappropriating the visibility of being made knowable, etc. – means that refugee subjectivities can be strategic, mobile, emergent and shifting, and produced, managed and employed in various ways simultaneously’ (de Vries, 2016: 894).

However, while this draws attention to the importance of regimes of (in)visibility in security practice, little attention has been paid to the mechanisms through which security actors actively seek to produce and inform such regimes. Put differently, what is of concern to this paper is the means through which security actors actively seek to shape the perceptions of those enacting security, and the regimes of (in)visibility they negotiate on a day-to-day basis. Thus, in contrast to the ‘tactics’ of visibility in concrete social relations, it is also necessary to talk of the *strategies* of (in)visibilisation that are pursued by security actors, and seek to make visible, and thus potentially manageable, problematised subjects and objects. Within a context of security, those responsible for enacting security measures need to see that to which they must be vigilant.

At the heart of the security problematic is thus a question of translation between the sayable and the visible. Folding back on the earlier discussion of temporality, it is possible to ontologise the concept of security as containing two key functions. First, the demand to produce the future threat as intelligible, and second, the demand to render the future threat as perceptible. While not always the case, it would seem the former is more aligned with discourse and the latter with visibility. Central to many security practices is a need for discursive security knowledges to be translated into a visible medium, such that security actors can visualise and integrate sense data into coherent subjects, objects and processes of threat, and in so doing, to train and direct the gaze towards such threats. This is not intended to privilege state institutions in their strategies of (in)visibilisation, neither as a

sole site of production nor in terms of their impact. Regimes of (in)visibility are manifold and contested. Attempts to (in)visibilise certain sites are always in the context of pre-existent regimes of knowledge. Such attempts may fail and they may well produce unexpected or unintended results. Yet, it is also to ascribe an importance to state security practices, and the mechanisms through which they seek to produce and communicate threats. Within the problematic of Channel, and the demand to identify potential vulnerability to radicalisation, these security practices are central to understanding how the policy seeks to function. It is thus to ask: How is the threat of radicalisation produced as a site of knowledge? And how are the discourses of radicalisation knowledge mobilised to enable security practitioners to identify vulnerability to radicalisation?

The (Vulnerability) Indicator as a Technology of (In)Visibilisation

In the context of Channel, what emerges as central to these processes is the vulnerability indicator. The 'indicator' can be understood as a key security technology of (in)visibilisation, producing, and serving to direct gaze and attentiveness towards, signifiers of threat in the present that are deemed to be important. The indicator takes different forms across security domains. In the case of Channel, it is indicators of 'vulnerability to radicalisation' that are central, enabling intervention prior to the actualisation of violence.

The centrality of the indicator emerges due to the relation to the future established by radicalisation knowledges. Radicalisation, as an object of knowledge, understands there to

be a process or pathway towards violence that can be identified, charted and mediated. In other words, that certain actions, behaviours or identifications in the present can be traced along a pathway to a potential harm in the future. This articulation of radicalisation, as a pathway that can be mapped and identified, allows action upon this process at various stages (Heath-Kelly, 2013; de Goede and Simon, 2013). If the guiding metaphor of radicalisation is the conveyor belt, taking an individual from passivity to violence, it is envisaged that through understanding movement along this path, individuals at risk can be made visible prior to manifesting as violent extremists, allowing the conveyor belt to be stopped and, potentially, reversed.

Much of the radicalisation literature is concerned with this demand (see, for example, Sageman, 2004, 2008 and Wiktorowicz, 2005). It is, however, an epistemological ambition that has been challenged, with the argument being that to search for any idea of general cause is problematic, and that variables only make sense in relation to specific cases (see, for example, Githens-Mazer, 2010; Schmid, 2013). What is lost in this debate, however, are the important ways in which such knowledges, and the practices they inform, are themselves generative. Read as a strategy of (in)visibilisation, not only does the vulnerability indicator discipline radicalisation temporally (as de Goede and Simon (2013), and Heath-Kelly (2013) rightfully note), it also produces the 'vulnerable' subject as a visibilised social site. The 'vulnerability indicator' as a security technology functions as a mechanism that translates discursive 'knowledges' of radicalisation into a series of indicators that seek to instil and manifest a particular distribution and type of gaze. A whole economy of visibilities will be produced that serves to inform the vision of pastoral agents; an economy that structures the visibility of those deemed secure and those who require securing. It must, of

course, be recognised that this is not a direct and unmediated process. These accounts of vulnerability will be interpreted and mediated by those who are tasked with their implementation. They may well be contested. Nevertheless, that these accounts of vulnerability are privileged by the Home Office and other bodies writing guidance and training entails they take centre-stage as a strategy of (in)visibilisation. They thus point towards an intent to produce and instil an expertise and economy of the gaze within these pastoral professions.

The most conclusive list of vulnerabilities is that found in the most recent Channel Guide, first published in 2012, which lists 22 ‘vulnerability indicators’ under the subheadings of engagement, intent and capability.³ Taken as a whole it is understood their assessment will provide a rounded view of an individual’s vulnerability, informing the decision over whether an individual needs support, and, through continued assessment, they can be used to track an individual’s progress (Home Office, 2012: 11-12). Engagement can be seen in ‘spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists’; ‘changing their style of dress’; ‘loss of interest in other friends and activities’; and ‘possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause’. Intention is identified through ‘using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group’; ‘condoning or supporting violence or harm towards others’; or ‘plotting or conspiring with others’. And capability can be seen in the suspect ‘having a history of violence’ or ‘having occupational skills that can enable acts

³ These indicators derive from a tool called ‘Extremist Risk Guidance 22+’ (ERG22+). ERG22+ was developed, without wider consultation, by psychiatrists working for the National Offenders Management Service. The original study, which underpins the ERG22+ framework, has never been subjected to external oversight, lacks credible peer review and has not been replicated. Nor has the dataset used for the study been publicly released (Qureshi, 2016; see also Mythen et al., 2017).

of terrorism’ (taken from Home Office, 2012: 12; the full list can also be found from this citation). What becomes clear is that there are a series of behaviours, skills and political or theological utterances that, whilst in themselves are legal, become newly visibilised, check-listable indicators of a potential to radicalisation that requires mediation.

This impulse becomes even more evident in the guidance given to those pastoral organisations with Channel responsibilities. The most useful documents in this regard are those issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)⁴ and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)⁵ to schools, colleges and universities. While these particular guidances, dating from 2008-2012, are from the early Channel rollout, the intersection they established between safeguarding and questions of radicalisation was crucial, informing Channel practice and training to this day (see, for example, the WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) training (Home Office, 2014)). These provide examples of real life occurrences that are seen by policymakers to be indicative of potential future violence, and are thus important for pastoral professionals to be aware of. They therefore enable an understanding of the *particular* visible performances and identifications which are, by nature of their perceived threatening potential, in need of mediation.

ACPO’s guidance to schools included a list of ‘vulnerable behaviour identified in schools’. It includes: ‘[o]penly anti-Christian, anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic words and behaviour’; ‘[s]tudents glorifying acts of violent extremism; ‘[a] religious convert who had also joined a

⁴ The Association of Chief Police Officers (since replaced by the National Police Chiefs’ Council), is comprised of senior policing staff from across the country, and is responsible for coordinating policing in the UK.

⁵ Now called the Department for Education.

street gang, using inappropriate language in school'; '[e]xpression of far right racist views'; '[g]raffiti in school books supporting violent extremism'; '[p]ossession of a video on a mobile phone, showing a beheading'; '[a]ggressive behaviour towards fellow students and disrespectful behaviour to staff particularly towards female members of staff'; '[d]rug use by a school pupil who was a religious convert and had insecure family relationships'; '[a] student with mental health issues who associated with others who held extremist views'; and '[a] strong desire to possess guns and knives and be part of a gang' (ACPO, 2009: 34; see also ACPO, 2012).

Similarly, DCSF guidance provided 'recent examples' that had arisen in schools. These included: pupils bringing 'far-right literature encouraging violence towards a local ethnic community' into school; a primary age pupil 'talking about the "duty of all true Muslims to prepare for jihad war as we grow up" and talks of the '7/7 martyrs' with admiration'; and a supply teacher leaving a book in the school library which stated "'that seeking to be killed and pursuing martyrdom are legitimate and praiseworthy acts'" (DCSF, 2008a: 35). Lastly, the following three examples are given as 'concerns' that had arisen in colleges: the 'college is approached by a group of students who find that the local mosques do not provide enough scope for them to discuss and debate particular topical issues that relate to religious ideology and how they can apply their understanding of their faith within the modern world. They want to set up a society where they can do this'; 'an individual has been seeking to access an Arabic website that is not on the agreed list' and 'a report that a student is upsetting other students by challenging their clothing as un-Islamic and encouraging them not to mix with non-Muslims' (DCSF, 2008b: 28).

One of the examples that recurs, and was quoted earlier, is that of a young adult writing extremist graffiti in an exercise book. Its appearance as an example across these guidance documents is most likely due to the case of Hasib Hussain, one of the 7/7 bombers.

Described by Norman Bettison (who, at the time, was responsible for Prevent within ACPO) as a 'model student' who had never come to the police's attention prior to the attacks, it was found that his school exercise books were full of supportive references to al-Qaeda. As Norman Bettison goes on to state in his evidence to the Communities and Local Government Committee:

To write in one's exercise book is not criminal and would not come on the radar of the police, but the whole ethos, the heart of *Prevent* is the question for me of whether someone in society might have thought it appropriate to intervene. What do I mean by intervention? I do not mean kicking his door down at 6 o'clock in the morning and hauling him before the magistrates. I mean should someone have challenged that? They are the sorts of cases that get referred through the *Channel* scheme (Communities and Local Government Committee, 2010: 17).

Taken as a strategy of (in)visibilisation, what Bettison is thus insisting upon is the need to attune the gaze of relevant professionals to such signs, to enable intervention prior to radicalisation. The effect of these examples and indicators is to affirm that vulnerabilities towards radicalisation *existed*, but were not necessarily made visible. As Channel training produced by the College of Policing states, staff 'who are already supporting vulnerable people [...] see signs but don't always realise what they could indicate' (College of Policing & Metropolitan Police Service, 2014). Put another way, the *signs* of potential (violent) extremism were available, but were not integrated into an accurate visualisation of threat, not seen, or at least, were not seen for what they were. 'Vulnerability indicators' seek to reshape the interpretative lenses through which agents responsible for security see and

perceive the world. If, prior to Prevent, graffiti in a notebook went unnoticed, the priority of Prevent is to ensure that it is visibilised as a key site of knowledge and gaze.

These indicators do not merely exist in policy guidance, but are crucially the basis for training and professional development that are, increasingly, mandated for millions of workers who fall within the statutory obligation of the Prevent duty. Training programmes such as WRAP are now a core part of the professional lives of, for instance, teachers, social workers and healthcare practitioners (see Home Office, 2014). This new role has been contested. Professional organisations such as the National Union of Teachers and the Royal College of Psychiatrists have been deeply critical of the duties members of their professions are expected to enact (Adams, 2016; Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2016). However, now that Prevent is a statutory duty, failure to comply can result in significant censure, including direct state intervention in the failing institution. Potential strategies and tactics of resistance are beyond the scope of this paper, but it is clear there are institutional pressures to report. This may go some way to explaining the decreased number of referred cases that go on to receive a Channel intervention. As discussed earlier, prior to the 31st March 2014, 20% of referrals received support within Channel, compared to 5% in the 2015/16 reporting year. Put differently, the threat of censure across a range of responsibilised professions may be leading to the over-reporting of signs of ‘vulnerability’.

The Channel process thus reveals key aspects of how indicators as a security technology enable the (in)visibilisation of threat. When this paper talks of the visibilisation and illumination of ‘vulnerability’, it is not merely metaphor, but an articulation of the (no doubt

always contested and unfinished) attempt by state actors to transmit to pastoral professionals a particular economy of visibility that *enables* the accurate visualisation of the potentially threatening subject – in this case that subject who may go on to be radicalised. Reflecting on the significant increases in Channel referrals, these would suggest such training is successful in getting professionals to interpret their practice anew, spotting, what are at least interpreted as, signs of vulnerability to radicalisation. It is an active strategy of (in)visibilisation that seeks to produce an economy of the gaze that draws attention to some, and diverts attention from others. Certain individuals, by virtue of their behaviours, are illuminated; others, in not being indicated, are invisibilised and produced as secure. Yet such production is necessarily political – seeking to direct the gaze in concrete and specific ways. It is to the politics of this strategy of (in)visibilisation that the paper now turns.

The Politics of Channel

The framing of radicalisation within a context of vulnerability positions pastoral agencies at the forefront of identifying individuals who might benefit from a Channel intervention. In so doing, there is a clear intent to mobilise a pre-existing pastoral gaze, already attuned to particular sites of knowledge. This reliance upon the professions has grown over time within the policy and mobilises the duty of care they possess to their subjects. In CONTEST 3, resources were shifted from local community providers to these specified authorities. The key rationale of the shift is that it draws parallels between counter-radicalisation work and other issues of safeguarding, thereby invoking Channel as an intervention of care (see Heath-Kelly, 2017b; Ragazzi, 2017). The process of preventing the vulnerable from the risks

posed by extremist thought is understood as analogous to protecting the vulnerable from drug or alcohol dependency, or from engaging in criminality or gang-based violence. As the WRAP training clearly states to relevant professionals:

You may not know it, but you're integral to Prevent's success: because you already have the skills and support to hand that can recognise when someone may be becoming involved in or supporting terrorism, and can help them make a decision not to carry on that path, before any crime is committed (WRAP 2014: 1).

The identification of vulnerability is taken to be a generalised skill, of which many are already experts, and into which the specific knowledges concerning vulnerability to radicalisation can be integrated. The training goes so far as to state that, 'we don't need to understand the ideologies or ideas that are promoted, more the way they work to hook in the vulnerable' (WRAP, 2014: 2). What is thus invoked is a conception of an already existent pastoral gaze, attuned to sensing, seeing and managing vulnerability.

However, this does not entail that Channel represents a politics of care to the exclusion of questions of ideology, and the racialised and Muslimified politics of identity this brings in. As a strategy of (in)visibilisation, the question must also be, who is illuminated? And what properties are rendered intelligible as signs of potential future terrorism? In this regard, while the training documentation is at pains to point out that signs of vulnerability to radicalisation are generic, attention to the indicators discussed previously allows a reading of the politics of identity which they work to (in)visibilise. It stands out that in many of the examples, there is merely an expression, perhaps verbal, perhaps communicated in images, of a politics or religiosity. It is in this context that anti-Christian, anti-Semitic or anti-Muslim words and behaviour, expressing racist views and accessing extremist websites can be understood. It is also within this framing that concern around a group of Muslim students

wishing to debate politics and theology outside of their local mosque can be situated. These political and theological expressions are now an intimate security concern. Moreover, it clearly raises questions over who judges 'extremism' and where the line is drawn. For instance, take the example of a supply teacher bringing extremist material into college, which the police aim to help with by assessing its legality and then taking protective actions (ACPO, 2012: 23). On the one hand, this demands an extra layer of mediating, with colleagues having to judge whether the material *might* be extreme, thus warranting further police guidance. On the other, it brings in questions of expertise and judgement over the constitution of the boundary of that which is or is not 'extreme'.

These are the concrete instantiations of the 'extreme' and are intimately related to conceptions of 'Britishness' and 'British values' (see Martin 2014a, 2014b). Extremism is defined as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs' and includes 'calls for the deaths of members of our armed forces' (Home Office, 2011b: 107). Thus, within the 'vulnerability indicators' there is a politics of identity and a disciplining of the boundaries of 'Britishness'. Harm for the future is produced as significations of threat in the present, embodied by particular subjects. As a discursive statement of threat, those who are *seen* to be opposed to British values, and not containable within a normalised account of 'Britishness' are illuminated, situated as risky. Those *seen* to cohere, to ascribe to normalised categories of 'Britishness' are invisibilised within this context, not necessitating attention.

Channel's vulnerability indicators thus cannot be understood outside of a context in which question of 'extremism', 'Britishness' and 'British values' are *already* invested with a substantive identity politics. This is particularly the case for racialised minorities in the UK, and specifically for subjects who would identify as, or be perceived as, Muslim. These questions of inclusion have long colonial and post-colonial histories. For the purposes of this paper though, it is enough to recognise that within the context of the 'War on Terror', Muslim-ness has been represented as potentially threatening and not necessarily in coherence with 'Britishness' (Richards, 2011). To give but one example: in response to the attacks in France at the beginning of 2015, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government sent a letter to Muslim organisations, intended to reassure them in the face of potential hostility, and ask them to continue to reject extremism in their communities (Pickles and Ahmed, 2015). Yet, as the Muslim Council of Britain pointed out (Wintour, 2015), the letter makes certain implicit and problematic assumptions, stating that, '[y]ou, as faith leaders, are in a unique position in our society. You have a precious opportunity, and an important responsibility: in explaining and demonstrating how faith in Islam *can be* part of British identity' (Pickles and Ahmed, 2015, emphasis added). Islam is positioned as continuously needing to establish an inclusion; its coherency within 'British identity' is never quite proven, always requiring work, continuing a legacy of representing Muslimness as in tension with a normalised Britishness (Sobolewska, 2010; Gutkowski, 2011). While strategies of (in)visibilisation seek to produce regimes of (in)visibility, this necessarily intersects with a pre-existing distribution of the gaze and objects and subjects of knowledge. Thus, there is a statement of vulnerability (the extremist, those opposing British values) alongside a regime of visibility (governing who and what is seen, perceptions of identity, difference and threat). Pastoral frameworks of care and vulnerability are thus mobilised

alongside a distribution of the gaze in which Muslimified subjects are more likely to be viewed as external to 'British values' and as threatening.

In de Vries' (2016: 876) account of the politics of (in)visibility with regard to refugee populations in Malaysia, she emphasises the 'play' of visibility within, what she terms, a context of 'governance-resistance'. Subjects are not merely the objects of visibilisation, but are attuned to the rules of the game, and are able to act tactically in relation to regimes of (in)visibility (de Vries, 2016: 889). While resistance to the operations of Channel *per se* is beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth recognising the agency with which Muslimified subjects negotiate these regimes of (in)visibility *as* a site of (in)visibility. Academic research is emerging that points to such negotiations. Mythen et al. (2012) provide interview evidence from young British Muslims of the changes to behaviour and appearance they enact in response to British counter-terrorism policies. They provide qualitative data showing how their Muslim respondents are very much aware of the visibilities that are seen to signify risk. They talk of the need to modify how they present their religiosity and politics, such as by concealing their beards, out of a fear that such performances might be misinterpreted and could lead to suspicion (Mythen et al., 2012, p. 393; see also Brown and Saeed, 2015). These practices point to the intimate relationship between statements of values and extremism and visibilised and embodied spaces of identity, belonging and perceived threat. The language of 'extremism' that permeates the indicators and the discourses of Channel is not neutral, but folds back upon existing distributions of the gaze and sites of knowledge. This reading of the politics of (in)visibility helps explain the comparatively high number of referrals for 'Islamist extremism', and also, perhaps, the significant number of referrals which do not go on to receive a Channel intervention. It

speaks to pre-existing regimes of threat, which serve to render certain subjects visible as more threatening than others, regimes that do not necessarily cohere with the specific concerns of radicalisation that Channel panel members are looking for (yet which are, nevertheless, inscribed through guidance and training documents).

Nevertheless, while they fold back on pre-existing regimes of (in)visibility, vulnerability indicators are also, and crucially, productive. They produce novel sites of visibility at the intersection of identity and the pastoral, bringing together an analysis of 'vulnerability' and 'extremism' that situates them as intimately connected to conceptions of 'Britishness' and its risky exterior (see also Heath-Kelly, 2017a). The politics of care folds back on Channel's politics of identity. Existing safeguarding risks, visibilities and proficiencies come to play in the economy of visibilities that informs vulnerability to radicalisation. These indicators are not necessarily seen as factors in and of themselves, but are frequently linked to particular 'extreme' identities or behaviours. In so doing, 'generic' welfare issues become religiously, politically and culturally inscribed. So, returning to some of the examples and indicators listed earlier, drug use and insecure family ties may require care and support of some nature, but it would seem the reason for this being a vulnerability demanding a counter-radicalisation framing is that the individual is a religious convert. Likewise, examples are given of someone with mental health issues associating with others who are deemed to hold extremist views and of a religious convert, who had also joined a street gang, using inappropriate language in school. It must be assumed that problematic language has been a concern at schools prior to Prevent guidance. Yet here, alongside religiosity, it is presented as a threat indicator that teachers should be aware of specifically in terms of a potentially latent propensity to violent extremism. Channel produces newly visibilised sites of

knowledge – the drug-using religious convert, a subject with mental health concerns associating with those deemed to hold extremist views. Existing vulnerabilities are inscribed within a system of light that – when conjoined with questions of identity, ‘Britishness’ and extremism – sees them as potential signs of future violence. It should thus be no surprise that, for the reporting year 2015/16, 50% of referred individuals were signposted to other support mechanisms rather than being progressed to a Channel panel; only 14% of all referrals were discussed at a panel (Home Office, 2017: 4). At the intersection of a politics of care and a politics of identity, this speaks to the complex space in which professionals are now expected to operate, and in which decisions to refer, or not, are made. Channel is productive of its own gaze.

In asking pastoral professionals to watch out for ‘extremism’, and indeed, to judge just what that extremism looks like, Channel is making new demands of such professionals. The textual relation of specific concerns, such as mental health, drug use, poor behaviour, alongside associations with extremism, that are found in guidance and training documents, visibilises them in new ways. Such longstanding concerns are reframed. And, in the context of the politics of identity mobilised through Channel, is likely to visibilise racialised and Muslimified subjects at this new intersection of care and security. It is a structuring of the economy of the gaze to focus on certain subjects and not others. It at once mobilises an existing gaze while also producing new sites of knowledge that carry their own economy of (in)visibility.

Conclusion

Four conclusions can be drawn from the above analysis. First, it is hoped that this paper has directed an attentiveness towards the mechanisms through which security regimes are, at least at times, constituted through strategies of (in)visibilisation. It has been argued that, beyond, but often mobilised through, the discursive, security regimes also operate through producing an optics of that which is risky, requiring securing, and that which is not. These function as economies, illuminating certain sites and not others, directing the gaze of security actors, and producing newly visibilised subjects, objects and processes that are deemed threatening. The paper thus extends and clarifies the increasing scholarly concern with security visualities, pushing the debate beyond the study of visual artefacts (important as this is), towards the production of the visible itself. In so doing, it is hoped this paper provides a starting point for thinking through how certain subjects are visualised and made visible as sites of risk, and how this illumination functions within an economy of attention and gaze.

Second, Channel, this paper has argued, only makes sense when understood as a strategy of (in)visibilisation. Beyond critiques that see Prevent as a technology for producing and governing individuals (Heath-Kelly, 2013, de Goede and Simon, 2013) and critiques that situate Prevent as productive of suspect communities (Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009; Breen-Smyth, 2014), this analysis demonstrates that a crucial facet of Prevent is that it seeks to structure the gaze of millions of professionals who possess a duty to maintain vigilance for signs of vulnerability. It demands an attentiveness to extremism, and the politics of identity that brings with it, into the day-to-day life of pastoral-security professionals. It is a

regime of (in)visibility that, structured by knowledges of radicalisation that invoke a linear temporality, situates the security problematic of becoming (dangerous) at the heart of the pastoral gaze. And in so doing, it goes beyond the politics of individual interventions. What is at stake within Channel are new lines of sight, new subjects of visibility, new distributions of the sensible. At the heart of the Channel process is a demand to restructure the gaze of pastoral professionals towards new threats. It is a desire to transform how millions of public sector workers see and engage with their environments.

Third, the gaze that Channel constitutes, while framed as apolitical, solely concerned with safeguarding, is invested with politics. It is a gaze that must *integrate* concerns of vulnerability and care, and those of extremism, values and 'Britishness', producing new subjects of risk, amenable to both gaze and mediation. Vulnerability indicators, communicated through the training of pastoral professionals represent a key site of production of particular visibilities (the vulnerable, the extreme, those opposed to 'British values') and invisibilities (those who are seen to cohere, and are thus unseen). In so doing, Channel institutes its own boundary. Not coterminous with the law, nor the territoriality of the state, it mobilises perceived lack of coherence to vague ascriptions of 'Britishness' and 'British values' as signifiers of threat, folding onto both existing racialised regimes of risk and pastoral regimes of care. It inscribes a novel economy. Navigating the intersections of a politics of care and a politics of identity, it produces and communicates a novel border, demarcating the secure from those now requiring mediation. This has concrete consequences for the expression of identity. In its preclusive demand, performances of certain identities are now part of an amalgam of risk indicators to which professional gazes must be attuned. Thus, it becomes the visible, performative expression of such values, ideas

and ideals that signify risk. In essence, it is the performance that becomes intolerable, and thus, a whole range of legal political or religious expressions become subject to novel interventions.

Fourth, Channel thus represents an at once coherent and yet deeply troubling merging of a politics of care with a politics of identity. As Ragazzi (2017:167-170) has rightly identified, the Prevent strategy marks a key move towards the integration of social policy within a security framework. Within the context of the pastoral-security gaze produced within Channel, what further emerges is a novel ambition that seeks to embed security at the heart of everyday social relations (see also Heath-Kelly, 2017a). If, part of the human condition is change over time – of *becoming* – then the promise held by Channel is that, with the right training, becoming that is becoming *dangerous* can be *made visible in the present*, can be identified, and, ultimately, can be mediated before such danger manifests. Channel can thus be read as a strategy of (in)visibilisation at the forefront of visibilising life itself as a process of (potentially dangerous) becoming. It is the frontline of a profound merging of a politics of care and a politics of identity, enabling new subjects and objects of risk to be identified, and with significant implications for our understanding of how contemporary life must be secured.

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